10: Browne D-5 (1893) 1894
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Malformations are scarce, but as mentioned before (p. 323), arrest of growth of the pinna of the left ear was observed in one instance; and a boy with talipes equino-varus was seen near Westquarter; but his condition was said not to be congenital, but acquired as the result of an accident. 164 732

Herniæ have been of pretty frequent occurrence of late years, Dr. Hart having seen six cases since 1888, before which date he had no record of having observed any cases of it. Of these six, four were of inguinal hernia, three on the right side, and one on the left, one was a left femoral, and one, in a female child, umbilical. The sudden occurrence of so many cases in succession would seem to indicate some cause of recent origin; what this may be it is difficult to see, but it is ascribed by some to the new style of work required for the building of the fish-curing station, piers, and other relief work, requiring the lifting of heavy weights. 164 [464] [483]

Fevers.—Measles and scarlet fever have not been seen for some time. Some years ago there was an outbreak of enteric fever in Middlequarter, when a large proportion of the population of the hamlet were attacked by it, and there were several deaths.

"Constitutional" diseases.—Phthisis, though not common, is sometimes met with; and strumous affections, abscesses, &c., are not unfrequently seen, though not very numerous on the whole. The only wonder is that these affections are not more common, as the sanitary state of the houses is not by any means good; and it must be mainly due to their open-air life that they do not suffer more. Malignant disease is said to be unknown. Rheumatism, especially in the form of lumbago, is a very common complaint, but the acute form is rare. [364]

Dietetic Diseases.—These, with rheumatism and bronchitis, form the great majority of all the affections met with; the large extent to which fish and potatoes enter into their dietary may have something to do with this, but there can be no doubt that the use, or abuse, of tea must bear a certain amount of the blame. The most common forms of complaint are flatulence and constipation. As might be expected from the fact of fish forming a large part of the every-day food of the people, ento-parasites are among the most common of all troubles, about every tenth case applying for treatment being due to them. *Ascaris lumbricoides* is the worm most frequently found. 164 262

Respiratory Diseases.—Phthisis has been before alluded to; bronchitis and pneumonia are not uncommon in the winter months. 164

Local affections are but few, and those not very serious. *Eyes.*—Phlyctenular ophthalmia is not very common. *The teeth* are usually [142]

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many of the stones are set vertically or diagonally.[1] Others of the same character, or equally massive earthen banks, may be observed to radiate from some of the raths or 'Danish forts' which we now know to have been farmsteads of the Dark Ages and, since they seem to have been single farms held in severalty, the enclosures which they presuppose are likely to be co-eval with the raths. Indeed Professor O'Riordain has claimed that the existing earthen field fences around the group of raths at Cush in Co. Limerick closely follow those of the late Bronze Age which were 'essentially similar' . . . 'the present-day field system is the direct descendant of the ancient one'.[2]

Much smaller and more irregular are the walls one sees associated with areas of megalithic settlement, though this may be because of their great age. Indeed one example recently discovered during the excavation of a megalithic tomb in Co. Down, which was older than the construction of the cairn and partly preserved by it, was built in coursed dry-stone work.[3] We have as yet little information to draw on but it seems likely that these oldest walls were mainly the result of the casual piling-up of stones cleared from little patches of cultivated ground. Some of the great walls associated with clachans and referred to above may well be built on the foundations of such lines of stones pitched around and between bedded boulders which could not be moved. Yet the size of some of the stones built into these ancient walls is astonishing. I have watched a loose-limbed farmer, who seemed to inherit the physical characters as well as the skills of the megalith builders, handle with superb ease great boulders which one would think it beyond human power to move. A stout timber or iron bar and a sturdy slipe (Chapter XIII) are the tools used. Alternatively boulders may be buried *in situ* if there is sufficient depth of soil, but until recently there was a reluctance, for superstitious reasons, to break up large stones. I have not come across the old miners' practice of cracking stones with fire,[4] and except near towns or quarries the splitting of field stones by means of wedges, 'plug

[1] O. Davies, loc. cit., 62.
[2] S. P. O'Riordain, *P.R.I.A.*, 45 (1940), 89–181.
[3] A. E. P. Collins and D. M. Waterman, *Millin Bay, a late Neolithic Cairn in Co. Down*, H.M.S.O. (1955), 8.
[4] But A. Young (*Tour*, 2, 115) describes the process near Killarney in 1778.

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492 tied bundles on to the straddle-pins, and both sheaves and firewood are occasionally carried on light V-shaped wooden
482 frames. A similar carrying frame is known from Spain. There are several varieties of straddle, and a pattern found on Clare Island, in which one side engages in a hole bored through the
[171] other side, finds a parallel in the Shetland Islands and among the Lapps of north Norway: it could be of Norwegian origin. For long hauls the pack animal was undoubtedly the chief means of transport until the coming of the spoke-wheeled cart. For short distances the burden rope (Chapter XV) or the carrying creel was more convenient and it is still not uncommon to see the back-creel, the carrying basket or the hand barrow used for transporting turf or wrack over rough, soft or slippery ground (Fig. 57).

493 In some parts of the country, especially along the east coast,
483 a form of sled fitted with a box body is kept for the transport

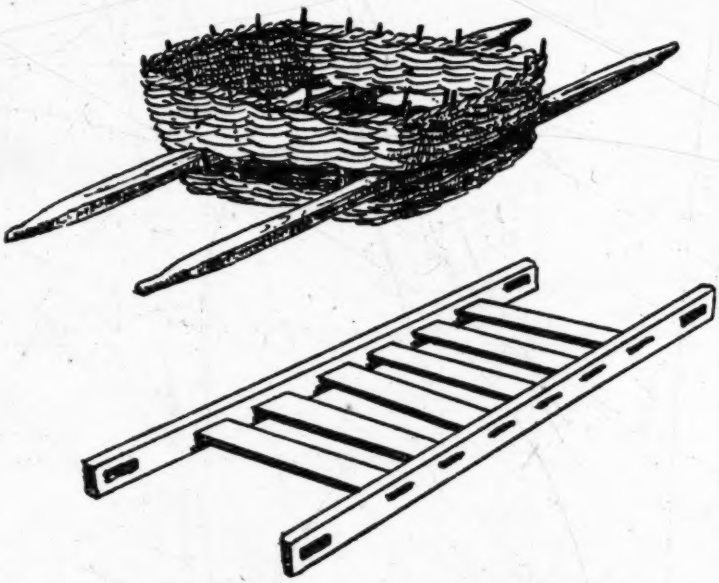

FIG. 57. Turf-basket, Co. Armagh and hand barrow, for carrying nets, Co. Antrim.

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493 in addition to its strength, is reputed to have special sliding qualities. A forked slipe can be dragged over rough, trackless, 483 boulder-strewn hillsides, where it will make and widen its own path as it goes. In such circumstances, given a favourable gradient, it can be man-hauled, and the persistent use of similar sledges for transporting large stones in other regions of megalithic culture such as the Dordogne—and indeed in Assam for surviving megalithic cults—hints that it comes down to us from very early times. The present distribution area of the forked [171] sledge in Europe, from Scandinavia round to the western Mediterranean, can be correlated with many archaic culture-elements.[1] Its preparation calls for no tool more sophisticated than an axe—even a stone axe would suffice—and as I have watched huge stones being sliped from the fields I have easily imagined myself transported to a clearing in a long vanished Neolithic forest.

The standard flat slipe is a rectangular platform supported on two low parallel runners which may be shod with iron. It will be found on many farms and serves numerous purposes—for hauling stones, potatoes or turf, or for transporting the plough or the harrows from field to field (Fig. 58, 2, 3). There is, however, a simple, light slipe, made either of wood or of iron, which is kept specially for moving the wheel-less plough (Fig. 42). The wooden form finds exact parallels in Sweden and the east Baltic lands.

In the Antrim Glens, where topographic conditions and isolation have preserved an unusually full series of archaic vehicles, I have seen a light forked slipe loaded with sacks of peat being man-hauled, the forked end being lifted off the ground by a rope bearing on the puller's shoulder. This is in effect a slide-car, and although the Irish slide-car is always pulled by a pony, it may be noticed that the Swedish slide-car, used mainly for carrying hay, is often man-hauled. No doubt the forked form is the more primitive and there is some evidence to suggest that it was from a forked slide-car that the first European carts and wagons were evolved by the addition of

[1]E. E. Evans, 'Some Archaic Forms of Agricultural Transport in Ulster' in *Aspects of Archaeology* (Ed. W. F. Grimes), (1951), 108–23; J. M. Mogey and G. B. Thompson, *Man*, 51 (1951), 3–5.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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wheels and a draught-pole. The body of the traditional ox-cart of Spain and many parts of India is suggestively triangular in shape. 493 [483]

The horse-drawn, wheel-less slide-car consists in its simplest form of two parallel poles, serving both as shafts and runners, fastened together by cross-pieces which form a carrying platform (Fig. 59). It was widely used down to the eighteenth century, but is now confined in distribution almost entirely to Ulster and in function mainly to the transport of turf from mountain bogs down steep tracks to the valley farms. For this purpose a large creel or kish is secured to the carrying platform, and it will take loads of potatoes or manure as required, but as a vehicle for general farm use the slide-car is now virtually extinct. That it has lingered so long in the mountainous corners of Ulster is perhaps due to the fact that the creel-carrying ass did not supplant it as it did in the milder south and west of Ireland (Pl. 8, 1).

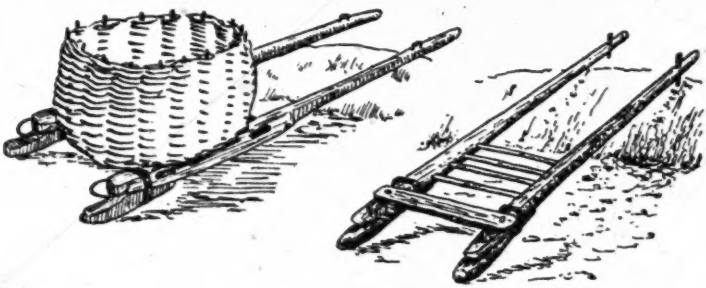

FIG. 59. Slide-cars, Cos. Tyrone and Antrim.

This primitive vehicle, which can be constructed entirely of wood—in treeless districts even bog-timber was utilized[1]—is of high antiquity and of great ethnographic interest. It has been contended that the one-horse wheel-car evolved from a slide-car to which a log roller had been fitted, and in view of the fact that the wheel-car has a revolving axle such an evolutionary sequence seems probable. Gösta Berg thinks that this evolution took place in the heart of Asia,[2] but there is the possibility that

[1]H. Dutton, *Clare* (1808), 65.
[2]Gösta Berg, *Sledges and Wheeled Vehicles* (1935), 140.